

PRIMARY SOURCES FOR DRUMMERS

"After Orders. The following proportion of tents is allowed the army upon the next march—vizt—One soldier's tent for the field Officers of each regiment. One ditto for every four Commissioned officers. One do for eight Serjeants, Drums or fifes. One do for eight privates. The Brigadiers to have returns made out, and the above proportion of tents taken for their brigades, and one waggon for every fifty tents, and no more—No woman under any pretence whatsoever to go with the army, but to follow the baggage—The soldiers are to carry their camp kettles, which, if the army should come to action, are to be put into waggons with the tents. The invalids, under a good subaltern, are to guard the tents of each brigade."¹

"At the same Court Joseph Tern of 3rd Virginia Regiment tried for deserting from the Provost-Guard and taking a Prisoner with him, found guilty of a breach of Article 1st Section 6th of the Articles of War³ and sentenced to receive one hundred lashes on his naked back well laid on: Likewise Robert Gist Drummer in Coll Lamb's Regiment of Artillery tried for attempting to desert to the Enemy, found guilty, but on account of his youth only sentenced to receive fifty lashes on his bare back."²

"In future the Reveille will beat at daybreak; the troop at 8 in the morning; the retreat at sunset and taptow at nine o'clock in the evening—To render this duty uniform, the drummer's call to be beat at the right of the front line and answered throughout that line; then through the second & Corps of Artillery beginning at the left; The Reserve to follow the second line—Immediately upon this three rolls to begin and run through in like manner as the call; then all the drums of the Army at the heads of their respective Corps should go thro' the regular beat, ceasing upon the right which will be a Signal for the whole to cease."³

"At a General Court-Martial whereof Coll Tupper was President (March 8th 1778) Lieutt Tipton of 12th Virginia Regiment tried for embezzling the Country Clothing drawn for the soldiery in the Company to which he belongs; Secondly, for taking a Blanket from William Smith a Fifer in the said Company, by which means he suffered much with cold. The Court are of Opinion that Lieutt Tipton is not guilty of the Charges exhibited against him and do acquit him.

[...]

William Smith, who enlisted in February 1777, was at this time a fifer and drummer in Capt. Benjamin Casey's company of the 12th Virginia Regiment. He continued on the rolls of that regiment, redesignated the 8th Virginia Regiment in September 1778, until at least May 1779."⁴

"At a General Court Martial whereof Coll Tupper was President (10th March 1778) Lieutt Enslin of Coll Malcom's Regiment tried for attempting to commit sodomy, with John Monhort a soldier; Secondly, For Perjury in swearing to false Accounts, found guilty of the charges exhibited against him, being breaches of 5th Article 18th Section of the

¹ "General Orders, 13 September 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-11-02-0203>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 11, 19 August 1777–25 October 1777, ed. Philander D. Chase and Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001, pp. 211–213.]

² "General Orders, 28 January 1778," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0327>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 369–370.]

³ "General Orders, 8 February 1778," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0392>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 473–476.]

⁴ "General Orders, 10 March 1778," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-14-02-0090>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 14, 1 March 1778–30 April 1778, ed. David R. Hoth. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004, pp. 118–120.]

Articles of War and do sentence him to be dismiss'd the service with Infamy³—His Excellency the Commander in Chief approves the sentence and with Abhorrence & Detestation of such Infamous Crimes orders Lieutt Enslin to be drummed out of Camp tomorrow morning by all the Drummers and Fifers in the Army never to return; The Drummers and Fifers to attend on the Grand Parade at Guard mounting for that Purpose.

[...]

Lt. James McMichael wrote in his diary for 15 Mar.: 'I this morning proceeded to the grand parade, where I was a spectator to the drumming out of Lieut. Enslin of Col. Malcom's regiment. He was first drum'd from right to left of the parade, thence to the left wing of the army; from that to the centre, and lastly transported over the Schuylkill with orders never to be seen in Camp in the future. This shocking scene was performed by all the drums and fifes in the army—the coat of the delinquent was turned wrong side out' ("McMichael's Diary," 157; see also "Brigham Diary," 19; "Wild Journal," 106–7).⁵

"At a General Court Martial whereof Colonel Vose was President (April 8th 1778) John Conner of the 9th Pennsylvania Regiment tried for—1st desertion to the Enemy—2nd taking the Oath of Allegiance to the King of Great-Britain acquitted of the first charge, but found guilty of the second, being a breach of the 5th Article, 18th section of the Articles of War, and as he did not return to his Regiment after leaving Philadelphia is an addition to his crime they sentence him to receive 50 lashes and rejoin his Regiment.

[...]

The name John Connor appears in the records of the 9th Pennsylvania Regiment as a drummer and as a private. Article 5 of section 18 of the articles of war allowed for trial and punishment of crimes not specifically mentioned in the other articles (JCC, 5:807).⁶

"The hours appointed for the Exercise of the Troops having been changed makes it necessary to alter the hours appointed for the Drummers to practise which will for the future be from five to six in the morning and from four to five in the afternoon, any Drummer that shall be found practising at any other than the time mentioned above shall be severely punished—The Adjutants of the several Regiments are to pay particular Attention to this order as they will be answerable for the Execution of it.

The use of Drums are as signals to the Army and if every Drummer is allowed to beat at his pleasure, the Intention is entirely destroy'd, as it will be impossible to distinguish whether they are beating for their own pleasure or for a signal to the Troops."⁷

"General Orders, 4 June 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-09-02-0600>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 9, 28 March 1777–10 June 1777, ed. Philander D. Chase. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999, pp. 602–603.]

⁵ "General Orders, 14 March 1778," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-14-02-0138>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 14, 1 March 1778–30 April 1778, ed. David R. Hoth. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004, pp. 171–173.]

⁶ "General Orders, 16 April 1778," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-14-02-0483>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 14, 1 March 1778–30 April 1778, ed. David R. Hoth. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004, pp. 529–531.]

⁷ "General Orders, 9 May 1778," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-15-02-0072>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 15, May–June 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006, pp. 82–83.]